

Short Food Supply Chains

Potential to contribute to mitigate
climate change?

Irmi Salzer
ÖBV-Via Campesina Austria
Agrarbündnis Austria
European Farmers Coordination (CPE)



CPE

Coordination Paysanne Européenne
European Farmers Coordination
Coordinadora Campesina Europe



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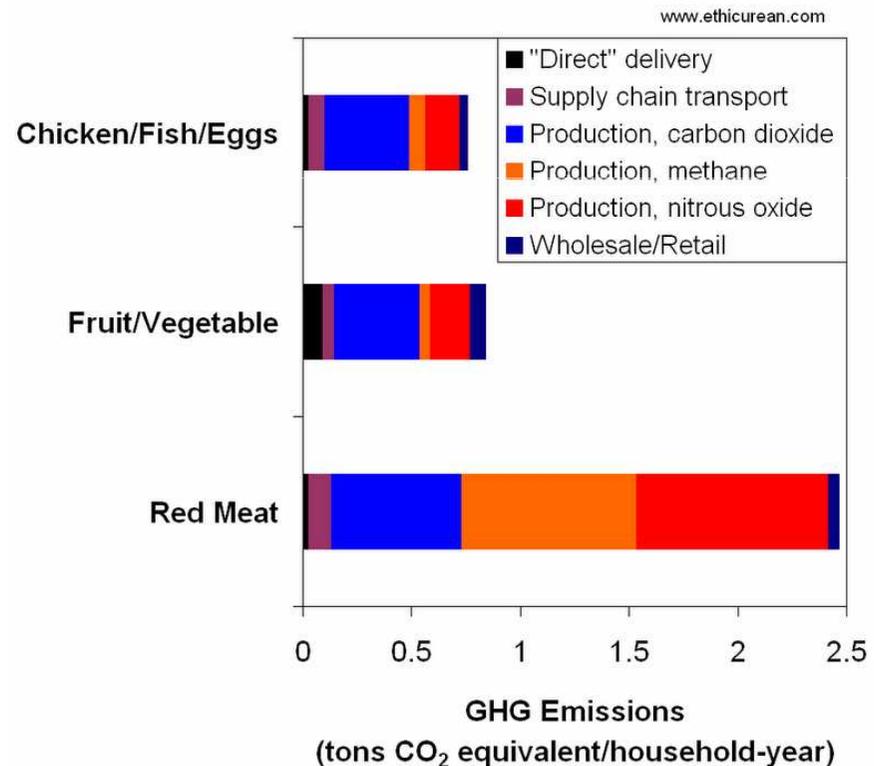
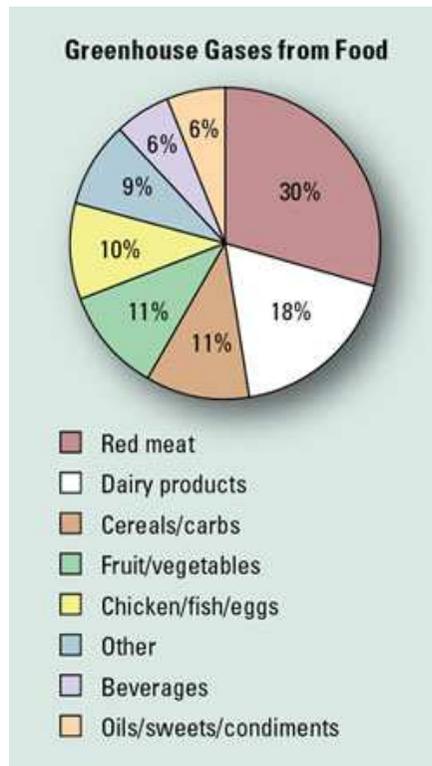
- Definition?
- „a hierarchical series of organisms each dependent on the next as a source of food“ (Oxford Pocket Dictionary)
- What is short?
- Push for „food mile“ labelling in Europe and US
- Term „food mile“ – problematic (size of trucks, tonnage)

Do food miles matter? (1)

- The vast majority of GHG emissions in the American food system occur during the production of food
(Research report by [Christopher L. Weber](#) and [H. Scott Matthews](#), of Carnegie Mellon University)
- Transportation creates only 11% of the 8.1 metric tons (t) of GHG that an average U.S. household generates annually as a result of food consumption
- The agricultural and industrial practices that go into growing and harvesting food are responsible for most (83%) of its GHG emissions.

Do food miles matter? (2)

- GHG emission depends more on what we eat and how it is produced than where it comes from



From Weber & Matthews, Environ. Sci. Technol. 42(10) 2008

GHG savings through “all local” diet

- Average driving per year in the US (medium class car): 12 000 miles
- An “all local” diet is equivalent to driving 1,000 fewer miles per year
- Shifting one day per week’s calories from red meat to a vegetable-based diet is equivalent to driving 1,160 fewer miles per year
- Giving up red meat and dairy in favour of chicken/fish/eggs is equivalent to driving 5,340 fewer miles per year
- Switching to a completely vegan diet is equivalent to driving 8,100 fewer miles per year (Weber, Matthews)

Is closer always better?

- Trucking in tomatoes from Spain during the winter produces less GHG emissions than growing them in heated greenhouses in Britain
- A shift towards local food systems might increase the number of food-vehicle miles travelled. This is because supermarket-based food systems have central distribution depots, and big full trucks. In local food systems, food is distributed in a larger number of smaller, less efficiently packed vehicles. (DEFRA, 2005)

Production systems matter!

- With average yields, the energy saving with **organic production** ranged from 0.14 MJ/kg to 1.79 MJ/kg, average being 0.68 MJ/kg or 42 per cent
- Milk: organic systems are almost **five times** more energy efficient (on a per animal basis) and 3,5 times more energy efficient in terms of unit output (the energy required to produce a litre of milk)

(DEFRA, UK, 2001)

Nevertheless, eat local food because...

- Helps to reinforce local economy
- Creates relations between consumers and producers
- Quality reasons (freshness, ripeness..)
- Promotes diversified farms
- Helps to preserve traditional food and skills
- Leads to more variety (less shelf life...)
- Does not benefit retailers and traders
- but instead helps to add value to peasants' and farmers' products

Critical issues

- Promotion of direct sales and short food supply chains as a „fig leaf“, while maintaining agroindustrial models and retail systems („Genussregionen“, Austria)
- Women carry the burden (consumers and producers!)
- Consumers´ democracy is no adequate remedy for all problems – no shift of responsibility (only) to the private sector

FAAN- Facilitating Alternative Agro-Food Networks

- EU-funded project which engages civil society organisations in a 'co-operative research' activity and in future research agenda-setting on 'Alternative Agro-Food Networks' (AAFNs).
- 5 academic institutions and 5 CSO partners from 5 EU member states will co-operatively carry out research including stakeholders on the following issues:
- Definition of AAFNs by social, political, commercial and cultural frameworks
- How do current policies facilitate or impede the development of AAFNs?
- How may alternatives be complementary or oppositional to conventional agro-food networks?
- How do AAFNs contribute to regional development?